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The Invention of the Modern Dog: Breed and Blood in Victorian Britain, by Michael Worboys, Julie-Marie Strange and Neil Pemberton, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018, 282pp, $39.95 (hardcover), ISBN 9781421426587.

The nineteenth century saw the 'invention' of the dog that we are familiar with today. It was during this period that human-doggy relationships in a form that we might recognise were born: breed became the dominant descriptor for dog bodies and scientific principles were applied to the process of developing and 'improving' them. Indeed, dogs during this period morphed into standardised, specialised and differentiated commodities and objects (p. 7). As material and cultural inventions, then, the dogs that we live alongside today are the product of these historical human manipulations. So goes the central argument of this richly detailed book, which does an excellent job of conjuring an image of the dog as a highly malleable entity, tweaked and tinkered with over the course of time. The book begins by charting the period immediately prior to the mid-1860s, before developing fashions in dog ownership and competition at dog shows led to breeding to conformation standards (conformation being the term used to denote a dog's physical form) and on the basis of a set of ideas about the purity of blood. It then proceeds to delineate the processes by which breed – and the processes by which breeds were 'made' - was governed, contested, and negotiated across the rest of the century. As the authors acknowledge, this breed-focussed argument is not new, having been articulated during the period itself (p. 6). What is novel about this work, however, is the point at which the modern dog emerged; while previous historians argue that the modern dog emerged either at the point of domestication or at the emergence of the pet dog, Worboys, Strange and Pemberton suggest that this emergence took place far more recently. Thinking in terms of breed, they suggest, is what led to the arrival of the 'modern dog' from the mid-nineteenth century.

While *Canis lupus familiaris* looms large (as you would expect) in this work, nineteenth-century dogs are accompanied by a host of 'doggy people', from individual breeders to the Kennel Club and from the so-called 'dog dealers' to the RSPCA. All of these groups present an array of attitudes towards

the creation and governance of doggy bodies, and all of whom were influenced by varying conceptualisations of progress, order and hierarchy. There were tensions, for instance, between amateurs and professionals (just as there were in an array of sporting activities of the period) and between those who valued earned worth and those who placed value on inherited worth, or pedigree (p. 7). These people themselves were products of their time, influenced by the intensification of industry, the rise of leisure cultures, the impact of commercialisation and the dynamics of class and gender. The entwining of people and their dogs in this work creates a profound sense of perpetual reinvention and this provides the reader with a striking sense of historicity. That being said, the dogs in this story often feel rather passive in what were undoubtedly co-produced relationships. The authors recognise the critical importance of interspecific co-production, and refer to Donna Haraway's work as foundational in this regard, but this aspect of dog-human relationships does not always come across effectively.

This work represents a significant contribution to related scholarship. Owing an acknowledged debt to the foundational work of Harriet Ritvo (*The Animal Estate*, 1987), and drawing on some of the approaches adopted by Ed Russell in his *Greyhound Nation* (2018), this piece significantly develops understandings of Victorian relationships with their dogs, presenting a doggy history that serves as a compelling companion piece to Philip Howell's 2015 *At Home and Astray*, which focuses on a similar period but which has a distinct spatial focus. As a contribution to both animal history and social history, this book ought to satiate interest in both the specific subject of the book as well as of the period much more broadly conceived.

Divided into eight chapters, including the Introduction and Conclusion the structure is generally chronological, though later chapters are also underpinned by a strong thematic rationale. The chapters connect effectively, though they also operate as individual essays. Each chapter contains a series of rich illustrations (and, indeed, there are a number of beautiful colour plates, too) which assists the reader in their understanding of changing doggy shapes and sizes as conformation

standards shifted over time. The use of case studies as illustrative devices is especially compelling. Chapter Five's case studies on the recovery of breeds, using Bulldogs and the controversial Wolfhound as examples, are especially effective.

This is not only a book about the past. It is – at its heart - about how the dogs of today were made. Collectively, twenty-first-century dogs exhibit far less variation between breeds and are much more easily pigeon-holed within discrete breeds than they were prior to the processes described in this book. The concluding chapter – 'The Past in the Present', does a particularly good job of delineating the connections between now and then, without falling into the trap of becoming presentist. In short, this work bridges the past and the present and compellingly reveals 'man's best friend' to be an historical construct. In so doing, it provides a rich and often surprising window into the complex and contingent human-animal relationships of the Victorian world.

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